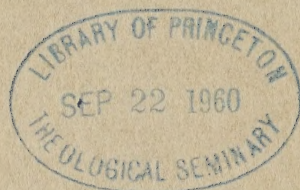


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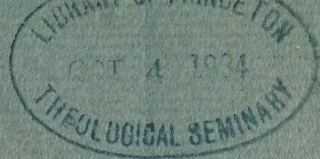
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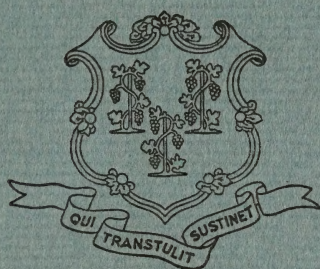


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The great awakening and
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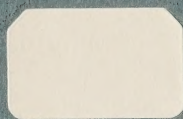
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of Connecticut
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Mary Hewitt Mitchell

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*The Great Awakening
and Other Revivals in the Religious Life
of Connecticut*

MARY HEWITT MITCHELL

I

THE Puritan founders of Connecticut, like those of Massachusetts, were the offspring of a remarkable revival of religious fervor in England. They moved across the Atlantic to set up their religious Utopia in the New World. Spiritual exaltation and earnestness sustained them amid the perils and pains of establishing homes and churches in the New England wilderness. Clergymen were their leaders. On the Sabbath, the minister, in gown and bands, preached to his flock beneath a tree or under some rude shelter. On other days, in more practical attire, he guided and shared the varied labors incident to the foundation of the new settlement.

The younger generation and the later comers, however, had more worldliness mingled with their aims, but religion continued a dominant factor in the expanding colonial life. Perhaps the common man felt personal enthusiasm for religion less than he did necessary regard

for provisions of the law, yet as he wandered into unoccupied parts of the colony, he was not leaving the watch and ward of the church. Usually, indeed, he did not wish to, since even the most worldly-minded desired the honors and privileges attached to membership in the church-state.

When distance made it difficult and burdensome to fulfill religious obligations in the original community and little outlying or detached groups wished for local self-government, the process of separation often began naturally and simply through the ecclesiastical organization. For instance, the first step would be to request allowance during winter months for their own neighborhood worship; then would come formation as a separate parish; and finally, incorporation as a town. If the new locality were more remote, the settlers would be accompanied by a minister, or would soon seek to secure one so that the religious and political organization of their new community might proceed with equal pace. Incorporation was granted only when the members of the new group had proved to the satisfaction of the general court that they had both the desire and the ability to establish a church and to support an able and orthodox minister. This requirement was enforced by the explicit regulation that a meeting house must be built in every town. The settlement of thirty families in a locality came to be the recognized basis for a new parish and town. Thus, in a double sense, Connecticut "was settled with a particular view to religion."

Utopias are more easily dreamed, and even founded, than maintained after the first enthusiasm wanes, so in a short time, weeds and brambles appeared among the vines of the new plantation. In the words of Benjamin Trumbull of North Haven, historian of the colony, "there

was a sensible decline as to the life and power of godliness . . . a general ease and security in sin." By 1660 the golden age of piety in Connecticut was drawing to a close. The authorities observed with sorrow the decline in religious life and morality, and recalled the exaltation of the early days with regret. In 1674, James Fitch, the first minister of Norwich, said in an election sermon, "Let us call to minde the first Glory in the first planting of New England and of the Churches here. Let me say multitudes, multitudes, were converted to thee O Hartford, to thee O New Haven, to thee O Windsor!" In 1686, John Whiting of Hartford, in another election sermon, questioned, "Is there not too visible and general a declension; are we not turned (and that quickly too) out of the way wherein our fathers walked?" He added, "A rain of righteousness and soaking showers of converting, sanctifying grace sent from heaven will do the business for us, and indeed, nothing else."

To this decline in piety various forces contributed. Life in the wilderness, with its almost inevitable "indianizing," was demoralizing. Recognition of this danger had been shown in the first sermon preached in New Haven, on "The temptations in the wilderness." The disasters, license, and horrors which accompanied the colonial wars of the century took men's minds from spiritual things. Furthermore, there were disputes with other colonies, distractions over the contemporary political changes in England, and fears that the Restoration would deprive the colonies of their liberties. Later on, the days of the Andros rule and of the hiding of the charter were even less favorable to religion.

More lamentable was the fact that, even before death had removed all the first leaders, trouble began in the very strongholds of religious life, in the churches them-

selves. Discord appeared in the Hartford church, and "from the fire of the altar, there issued thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes through the colony." New Haven, at that time distant and independent, felt the reverberations. "The differences arisen in the church of Hartford make me sad," remarked Governor Eaton. Though he would not consider his wife's suggestion to return to England, it was not long before Davenport and Pierson, holding the maintenance of their ideas of religion above other considerations, left New Haven and Branford, thus pathetically ending their hopes and visions of a religious Utopia in Connecticut.

Before the close of the century dissension was disturbing other churches. There were troubles in Wethersfield and Stratford, and the church in Windsor was described in 1680 as in a "bleeding state and condition." So serious were these controversies that the whole colony was affected. The present interest, however, in these symptoms and results of the altered conditions attaches to the measures taken to remove the trouble and revive the spirit of piety.

Official action of ministers and magistrates, the logical way to attempt reform in a church-state or Holy Commonwealth, was tried in all its forms. Every kind of civil and ecclesiastical machinery of the colony was set in motion. Inquiries into religious conditions and needs were ordered. Assemblies, councils, and synods; the general court, county courts, and town meetings; judges, justices of the peace, and selectmen, all were called upon to help in the effort "to further religion and reformation in these declining times," that "all possible means may be used for our healing and recovery from our degeneracy."

The first solution adopted, known as the Half Way Covenant, was directed towards keeping as many as

possible, especially of the younger generation, connected with the churches. This plan permitted baptized persons, under slight restrictions, to acquire formal church membership, though regular membership with admission to the Lord's Supper continued to be reserved for those who made profession of special or conscious religious experience. Like many compromises, this met with only partial approval, and those churches which did adopt it gave it up one by one, often as a result of a revival. From the point of view of early leaders such as Davenport and Street, it was "an uncouth way, and very unpleasant divinity," and later many men like Lyman Beecher regarded it as "this anomaly in religion."

In 1708 action was taken along another line, in an attempt to end increasing variations and confusions in the organization and management of churches by their submission to the Saybrook Platform. This was an ecclesiastical constitution which, it was hoped, would secure order, uniformity, and stricter government among the churches. It was drawn up by a group of ministers and laymen chosen under instructions from the general court, and with the special approval of Gurdon Saltonstall, influential minister as well as governor. Colony and county *consociations* of churches and *associations* of ministers were set up to which were assigned certain powers in connection with such matters as forming churches, settling religious disputes, and licensing ministers. The Platform was ordered printed and distributed at the expense of the colony, and was the first book printed in Connecticut. Since the fundamental idea of Congregationalism allowed each church to choose whether it would accept such measures, the refusal of some of the churches to adopt the Half Way Covenant and the Saybrook Platform prepared the way for trouble and dis-

putes. This difficulty was accentuated by different interpretations of its rules of discipline by those churches which did adopt the Platform.

As the churches became formalized under the influence of this constitution and secularized through the connection with the civil state, which must give final permission for constituting churches and which passed laws for their support by general taxation, the Puritan idea of the need for spiritual religion seemed about to disappear. Avoidance of openly scandalous conduct was considered sufficient by many people, churches grew lax in discipline, and there came to be little difference between many who were church members and many who were not.

The old spirit, however, never became extinct, and the attempts at reform by authority of formal bodies were constantly paralleled by the efforts of those who emphasized experimental religion, the "quickenings" of individual experience, the "washing of regeneration." As the method of reform by authority failed, and as formalism and secularization increasingly threatened religious life, awakenings or revivals, as they came to be generally called, were developed into the recognized means of gaining church members and of arousing and sustaining religious enthusiasm. The history of these movements was not unbroken, though in almost every year some church in Connecticut felt "gentle refreshings from the presence of the Lord"—something like a revival. Great outpourings of the Spirit that might properly be called revivals came at rarer intervals, and affected more than a single church or a single colony. In Connecticut as elsewhere there were two outstanding periods of revival activity: the first of these, known as the Great Awakening, reached its height in the short revivals of 1735 and 1740. After another era of religious decline, the second

and longer period of successive and wide-spread awakenings began about 1792.

Revivals had other results than the conversion of hundreds of individuals. In Connecticut, an immediate effect of the first period was to introduce new causes of division in the established church which had hitherto been substantially united. Still another result was to afford other denominations better opportunities to establish themselves in the colony. Its final effect, acting in conjunction with other forces, was to place all denominations on the same basis by the disestablishment of the Congregational Church. The revivals of the second period brought about the overthrow of infidelity which had been alarmingly prevalent, and gave the churches strength to survive the loss of state support in 1818. They also stimulated, by the broadened view of religious duty, the development of the great nineteenth-century religious and philanthropic activities, such as the opening of Sunday schools, the organization and support of foreign and domestic missions, and the efforts for the reform of morals, for example the struggle against the evils of intemperance. Even the earlier period of revivals had awakened in men like David Brainerd and Eleazar Wheelock missionary zeal for the conversion of the Indians. The school which Wheelock had started for Indian boys in North Lebanon, now Columbia, originally with the purpose of educating Samson Occom, converted during the Great Awakening, developed later into Dartmouth College.

An American clergyman, Calvin Colton, writing in the early nineteenth century to describe American revivals to English people, divided them into two classes (not corresponding to the two chronological divisions): those revivals which came with no apparent preparation,

“directly from the presence of the Lord, unasked for, unexpected,” supernatural visitations of the divine sovereign spirit; and those which were promoted by human instrumentality, “matters of human calculation by the arithmetic of faith in God’s engagements.” These human instruments, the zealous and efficient workers, were themselves the product of revival experiences.

Even prior to the first period of revivals, awakenings had occurred in individual churches. Some were occasioned by a special trial or calamity, such as an epidemic or the earthquake which prompted Eliphalet Williams, minister in East Hartford, at a later time, to preach on “The Duty of the People Under Dark Providences or Symptoms of Approaching Evils to Prepare to Meet Their God.” At the time of King Philip’s War, in 1675, the covenant of the church in Norwich expressed humble thankfulness “for some progress of Converting Work in some of the rising Generation among us; But . . . we do behold many unconverted Souls in this destroying year.” Hartford experienced a revival in the winter and spring of 1696, perhaps partly attributable to an Indian alarm and to poor crops. Between the end of February and the beginning of April nearly two hundred persons became members of the First Church, though the fact that all but twelve joined on the Half Way Covenant plan suggests aroused sensibilities rather than radical conversion. Only ten were received by the Second Church.

A few early awakenings, however, occurred apparently without such external causes. After the ordination of Timothy Edwards in East Windsor in 1694, the church is reported to have felt frequent revivals, though no record was kept of admissions. Some family letters state that in 1715 and 1716 Mrs. Edwards and two daughters made profession of faith as the result of a revival. In the early

years of the eighteenth century Branford had three small "ingatherings," that a later pastor said would have been technically called revivals. In 1721, though the general assembly felt obliged to pass an Act for Preventing and Punishing the Prophanation of the Sabbath or Lord's Day, Franklin, Norwich, Windham, and Windsor experienced revivals. The church at Windham, which added eighty to full membership within six months, was compared to "Gideon's fleece, which was filled with moisture when all around it was dry."

II

THE first period of revivals began in 1735. Strictly, the term, the Great Awakening, applies to the high tide of this movement in 1740-41, but it may also be properly used to refer to the earlier period of revivals as a whole. Though the rain of righteousness had started in Massachusetts, it soon spread over a more extensive area in Connecticut. By the end of May, 1736, about twenty parishes,¹ to a greater or less degree, had been affected. Personal reasons seem to account in some measure for the appearance of these revivals in particular localities. Thus, the pastor of East Windsor was father of Jonathan Edwards in whose church in Northampton the movement started. Benjamin Lord of Norwich, and John Owen of Groton, went to Massachusetts in 1735 to observe the work there. Lord's report of the work at Northampton was said to have been the chief influence in starting a revival in his church.

This initial revival was short-lived, and left many localities and the great body of the people untouched.

¹ These were Windsor, East Windsor, Coventry, Lebanon, Durham, Mansfield, Stratford, Ripton, Franklin, Tolland, Hebron, Bolton, Preston, Groton, Norwich, Guilford, New Haven, Windham, Woodbury.

Decline in religion continued, but ministers prayed for quickened life in their churches. In February, 1738, Daniel Wadsworth, minister of the First Church of Hartford wrote in his diary, "I am much concerned w^t to do to revive a Concern about religion among my people." George Whitefield, when he spent a night in 1740 with the Reverend William Russell of Middletown, found that he had been "long mourning over the Deadness of Professors." Prayers for a revival of religion were answered, but in a manner that filled many ministers with perplexity and dismay, and almost destroyed many churches.

The revival of 1735 aroused such general interest that Jonathan Edwards wrote *A faithful narrative of the surprising work of God in the conversion of many hundred souls in Northampton, and the neighbouring towns* (London, 1737; Boston, 1738). This account and the visits of the young English preacher, George Whitefield, and of Gilbert Tennent of New Brunswick, New Jersey, "the Soul of Fire," awakened a new and wide-spread religious enthusiasm in 1740. It extended practically to all places in Connecticut, among all kinds of persons, and was more powerful here than in other colonies, profoundly affecting religious life for fifty years.

The first visit of Whitefield to Connecticut began in October, 1740, when Jonathan Edwards brought him from Northampton to the house of his father in East Windsor. After preaching there, Whitefield went on to Hartford where, according to Daniel Wadsworth's diary, he preached "in the forenoon to a vast concourse of people here . . . and in the afternoon at Wethersfield." Thence he proceeded to Middletown, Wallingford, New Haven, Milford, Stratford, Fairfield, Norwalk, and New York. Thousands in Connecticut heard him preach; the legislature of the colony, in session in New Haven, was

adjourned that all might hear him; Governor Talcott embraced him and thanked God for such refreshings; but Daniel Wadsworth wrote, "W^t to think of the man and his Itinerant preaching I scarcely know," and men like him were worried and troubled.

Others were roused to enthusiasm and coöperated eagerly in promoting the revival. The clerical leaders of the Great Awakening in Connecticut were closely bound together by their acquaintance with Whitefield, by their ties of blood or marriage, or by their close mutual friendships and neighborly contacts. Four of these were conspicuous for their zealous activity in the revival and for their prominence in the resulting controversies, namely: Jedidiah Mills, pastor of Ripton,² Whitefield's "dear man of God," and the "three Boanerges in voice and manner," Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy, and Joseph Bellamy. Wheelock, the winning and strenuous pastor at North Lebanon, often with tears flowing down his cheeks and those of his hearers, preached one hundred more sermons in one year than there are days. Pomeroy, who was Wheelock's brother-in-law, and also neighbor, as pastor in Hebron, was considered a man of real genius and "a most thundering preacher of the new light order." More than once he was placed under arrest, and for seven years he was deprived of his salary. Bellamy, who was just entering upon his long ministry in the frontier town of Bethlehem, with his commanding presence and powerful voice soon became

. . . . a giant in the pulpit there,
Whose eloquence the devil's self might scare.

This masterful and domineering personality, whose learning distinguished him as the doctrinal Jonathan

² A new parish in the northern part of Stratford, now the town of Shelton.

Edwards of Connecticut, wielded almost despotic power in the religious affairs of the colony for half a century.

Through the efforts of these men and others, such as Jonathan Parsons of Lyme, and John Graham of Southbury, more or less aided by the prevailing commercial depression, the revival spread like wild-fire in the years 1740, 1741, 1742. Though there were towns such as Branford which were scarcely touched, and such as Danbury which were passed over entirely, most places rejoiced in large additions to church membership. Thus, in 1740, in five or six months, eighty were added to the church in Groton; in the same year one hundred and four were added in North Stonington, as against sixty-five in the nine previous years. In 1740 and 1741 about two hundred and fifty joined the two churches in Lyme, while in a little more than a year one hundred were added to the church in Franklin.

Unfortunately, though perhaps not unnaturally, much excitement and many indiscretions were connected with the movement. The theology of the time made conversion painful and exciting at best. The normal stages of experience were "awful apprehension" and misery over man's sinfulness and total depravity; submissiveness to God's absolute sovereignty; dependence on His grace and recognition of His justice even if it meant eternal damnation; and finally, in successful cases, happiness over conviction of being elected of God to eternal life. Such an experience, being "wounded" it was well called, inevitably produced extreme agitation so that meetings too often degenerated into scenes strangely incongruous with the sober Puritanism of Connecticut. Hysterical manifestations of all kinds were seen: "screachings, cryings out," bodily contortions, jumping, dancing, visions, trances, and faintings. Jonathan Parsons of Lyme said of

the effects of his own preaching: "Great numbers cried aloud in the anguish of their souls. Several stout men fell as though a cannon ball had been discharged, and a ball had made its way through their hearts. Some young women were thrown into hysteric fits." Occasionally meetings became so disorderly that a constable had to intervene.

By some these manifestations were considered marks of divine favor. Others regarded them as "the most strange management and a pretence of religion," and called them the work of Satan and the scenes a sort of Bedlam. The General Association, the organization of ministers, declared in 1742: "The great Enemy of Souls who is ever ready with his devices to Check, Damp & Destroy if possible the Work of God, is very busy for that purpose."

The most extravagant and influential, in Connecticut, of the followers and imitators of this part of Whitefield's methods was James Davenport, great-grandson of the founder of New Haven, and a favorite with Whitefield, with whom he travelled for a time. He was one of the youngest persons who ever entered Yale College, and was at this time a graduate of less than ten years standing. Hitherto sound and faithful, he became infected with the enthusiasm of Whitefield and started out to follow the example of his "ranging" or itinerant preaching. At this time the position of a minister settled, supposedly for life, in a geographical parish (a town or subdivision of a town), and supported by taxation under the laws of the colony, was different from that of a minister today in a poll-parish (a group of individuals), who is supported by voluntary contributions. Davenport felt called upon to go uninvited into the parishes, or domains as they might almost be termed, of such settled ministers to preach.

Indeed, he did not hesitate to denounce publicly as hypocrites and wolves in sheep's clothing those ministers whom he regarded as unconverted, and to declare them unfit to continue in the pulpit. These intrusions, as they were considered in many cases, and these denunciations became sources of contention. The Connecticut General Consociation of 1741 took the position that when men had been regularly chosen and ordained "they are lawful ministers of Christ, even if after all they should Really be Unconverted men." There are biographical accounts of more than one individual which report that he intended to become a minister even before he was converted. As late as 1789, President Stiles of Yale frequently gave as a topic of debate for seniors a question like this: "Whether a Man may go into the Ministry knowing himself to be irregenerate & unconverted."

In the pulpit Davenport went to extremes in noisy and eccentric conduct. Joshua Hempstead's diary described his meetings as "all mere confused medley," praying "without form or comeliness," and "nothing that was regular." He told of one meeting that lasted until two o'clock in the morning. Some people stayed all night in the meeting house or under the oak tree nearby where the meeting had been held because of the crowd. Often Davenport went singing through the streets, "bawling" his enemies called it, and stirring people to acts which remind one of the time of Savonarola. His career in this work was comparatively brief, covering only about three years, but was conversely lasting in its damaging effects. In July, 1741, he came over from his parish at Southold, Long Island, and travelled from Stonington to New Haven. Many went to hear him, and in Stonington, it is said, one hundred were converted under his first sermon, though his actions were described as boisterous. In New

Haven great confusion was reported, and ultimately the single church of the town was divided. About a year later complaint of his doings was made to the general court, and he was tried by that body. This did not end his activities as in March, 1743, while in New London to help form a Separate church, he organized in the main street a bonfire of religious books condemned by him as blind guides, and of idols, that is, worldly books, ornaments, and apparel. This was his last recorded appearance as a fanatic. The expostulations of friends and illness, followed by the recovery of his reason, led him in August, 1744, to put forth a retraction of his violent deeds, though this produced little or no effect on his followers. His extravagant behavior, however, was imitated by such laymen as "Lawyer Paine" of Windham who "has set up for a preacher . . . and makes it his business to go from house to house and town to town to gain proselytes to this new religion."

The excesses of Davenport and his "zealous yet wildish and scatterbrained" followers alienated "steady christians and the most Judicious among ministers and people," including many who had favored the revival in the beginning. Aside from objections to the strange conduct of the itinerants and resentment of their personal denunciations, many settled ministers naturally disliked the intrusion into their parishes of this new kind of strolling preachers and lay exhorters. They might apply Whitefield's own words, "Some called me a spiritual pickpocket," and oppose the itinerants as disregarding the laws for the settlement of ministers in parishes and the legal establishment or allowance of churches. As Governor Wolcott said, about this time, to a missionary of the Church of England, "Tis the first Time I have ever heard that an Itinerant was Minister of a Parish."

In an attempt to secure peace and to end the confusions resulting from the Great Stir, magistrates and ministers, authorities civil and ecclesiastical, once more legislated on religious matters. Isaac Stiles, Old Light minister of North Haven, in the election sermon of 1742, "turned the artillery of heaven in a tremendous manner" against the revival, comparing the New Lights, as the followers of Whitefield were called, to "Will with his wisp and Jack with his lanthorn." In response to such agitation, and to demands for measures to blow out the New Lights, the general assembly in May, 1742, passed a bill to restrain itinerant ministers, and another to arrest Davenport and Pomeroy and bring them before the assembly. The two-day trial of these arch-offenders was held in Daniel Wadsworth's meeting house, nearly causing a riot and necessitating calling out forty militiamen. Davenport, adjudged an enthusiast and breaker of the peace but "disturbed in the rational faculties of his mind," was not punished. He was ordered sent out of the jurisdiction as a vagrant, according to the law recently passed, and, guarded by a sheriff and led between two files of musketeers, was marched from the meeting house to the river and put on board a vessel for his home. Pomeroy was discharged as comparatively blameless, but was roughly treated by the people. Twice later he was in trouble with the authorities for disorders he committed.³

Soon after the first visit of Whitefield to Connecticut, Wadsworth wrote in his diary, "The prospect of our religious affairs Looks melancholly, the great awakening

³ Davenport became a respected minister in New Jersey, though he still had troubles. He died there about a dozen years later at the age of forty. After restoration to his parish in Hebron, Pomeroy seems to have confined himself to local duties except for helping his brother-in-law, Wheelock, found Dartmouth College and for service as an army chaplain in the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars.

&c seems to be degenerating into Strife and faction." His fears were realized to such an extent that the next forty or fifty years have been characterized as "the unhappy time," "separatical times," "the great schism," "the civil wars of the Lord." Parties were formed: those who opposed the awakening, the Old Lights; those who recognized the need for such a movement, but felt aversion to its excesses, the moderate New Lights; and those who favored it in all its aspects, the radical New Lights. Many of the latter, especially in southeastern Connecticut, went so far as to form Separate churches (more than thirty in number), denying the authority of the Saybrook Platform and coming into open conflict with the established order of the colony. Sooner or later, as religious liberty was gained, some of these returned to the church from which they had separated, while others joined the denomination most like them, the Baptist, or disappeared entirely. The Old Light party was especially active in New Haven county; the radical New Light party was strong in New London and Windham counties, in the eastern part of Fairfield county, and prevailed to some extent in Hartford and Tolland counties. Representatives of each party were found everywhere, ministers were about equally divided, leading citizens inclined to the Old Light party, and the rank and file of New Lights and Separatists were "chiefly of the lower and Younger Sort" or so it seemed to the Consociation of 1741.

The troubles arising from the Great Awakening may be grouped as follows: excommunications, arrests, and imprisonment of church members for frequenting Separate meetings or refusing to pay taxes for the support of the established church; removal from public office of justices of the peace and other officials for New Light activities; expulsion of a few students from Yale for

attending Separate meetings; rebuke and expulsion of ministers from their Associations and withholding of their salaries for helping form Separate churches, for licensing New Light ministers, or for preaching in other parishes than their own, either to Separate congregations of their own denomination or to Baptists; greater diversity of theological opinion; disputes and divisions of churches, with the consequent growth of Baptist and Anglican societies, made up of those who were disgusted with the excesses of the New Lights or were offended by the repressive acts of the authorities.

Examples of each form of conflict might be given, unfortunately, in considerable number,⁴ but again our interest is not in details of these happenings, but in their effect on religious life and revivals. Repressive measures, as might have been expected, served only to heap fuel on the fire of New Light enthusiasm, and to bring criticism on the colony. New Light ministers, shut out of meeting houses, preached in private houses or out-of-doors, immediately recalling memories of the first ministers of the colony. Men and women who were put in prison for failure to pay taxes were regarded as martyrs by their sympathizers, and their opponents complained that they spent their time "glorying in their Sufferings, and preaching daily to those that will come to hear 'em, moving their compassions." In the eyes of their party there was, as Benjamin Pomeroy said, "no Colony so bad as Connecticut for persecuting laws." Even some members of the Old Light party felt that the authorities went too far.

From the mother country, whose own established

⁴ Some verses written in 1769 said:

And this is what I have observed,
Of folks who've been new-lighting,
Like Saracens, Saints Soldiers make,
And prove their faith by fighting.

church was represented in the colony, and whose laws for the toleration of "sober dissent" had to be observed, came protests against the persecuting spirit prevailing in Connecticut. From other colonies came criticism. In 1759, Dr. Alison, vice-provost of the College of Philadelphia wrote to Ezra Stiles, later president of Yale, "I am heartily grieved for the Contentions and divisions that are like to prevail in Connecticut: I highly esteem that Church and people, and had almost determined to make it the retreat of my old age; but am vexed that they bite and devour one another. Nothing can be more fatal to their piety, morals or liberty; they will be swallowed up by the Episcopal Church, who envy them their prosperity and will avail themselves of these divisions." The Congregationalists were not swallowed up, but did lose many members to the Church of England, resulting in the formation of many new parishes and the erection of churches of that denomination. A group of people in Northbury, for instance, declared in 1744 that they fled to that church for safety from the confusions resulting from New Light "insufferable enthusiastic whims and extemporaneous jargon." The Anglicans said, "If these dissenters will but confute one another, it will save us the trouble."

The quarrels and confusions, however, as well as the conversions, ultimately brought good. From the spiritual quickening of the churches and the revolt against the dull, formal preaching of conventional morality there resulted for a time almost a moral revolution. From the revolt against intolerance and persecution by the established church and the civil authorities came religious liberty and equality. Before the end of the century, the persecuting acts and the Saybrook Platform, which had been ratified by the general assembly in 1708, were

omitted from revisions of the statutes and persecution was ended. Favoritism to the Congregational Church, still the established church, and to its ministers, continued some years longer, until religious equality was secured by the constitution of 1818. During the latter part of this period the Federalist party, kept in office continuously by the steady habits of Connecticut voters, and the clergy of the Congregational Church "like Moses and Aaron walked together" in such close alliance as to form a powerful ruling class known as the Standing Order. One clerical leader in the Federalist period, Timothy Dwight, was called Pope Dwight because of his political power, and enemies of the Standing Order said Connecticut was a priest-ridden state. On the other hand, toleration and democracy were regarded as almost synonymous with French atheism. This period of the Standing Order brought to a close the era of the church-state, the Holy Commonwealth, the religious Utopia.

The reaction from the extravagance and confusion of the Great Awakening, and the possession of political power by Connecticut ministers made the typical clergyman of the established Congregational Church a formal, stately personage, too frequently dull in manner, indirect, and non-committal in matter. The sarcastic McFingal said of the pulpit of this period:

Oft dulness flying from disgrace
Finds safety in that sacred place.

Lyman Beecher told in characteristic fashion of a sermon preached by one of these staid, conservative divines, his uncle, Noah Williston, pastor of the church in West Haven, in which he repeated the text "over and over, and turned it this way and that, and scratched it as a hen

does an ear of corn." People expected from their ministers little in religion beyond the doctrinal exposition of theology, read to them on the Sabbath, often with none of the graces of oratory, and regarded their own obligations as sufficiently fulfilled by faithful weekly attendance at the meeting house.

In this long period of religious controversy and of decline in piety which followed the Great Awakening, few people took an interest in experimental religion and none in revivals. Ministers, who had come to look upon these manifestations with fear and distrust, found it hard to believe that there could be any good in them when they reappeared at the close of the century. Nor was this the only unfortunate result of the injudicious acts connected with the Great Awakening. "Waste places," districts burned over by the destroying zeal of Davenport and his followers, existed, particularly in the eastern part of Connecticut, the hotbed of New Light enthusiasm. From them, said Lyman Beecher, "sally forth the infidel, seeking whom he may devour." Such places were long in recovering. As late as 1813, Thomas Robbins observed that a town in another part of the state, "is almost ruined by religious sectarianism, which has prevailed here seventy years."

"Moral camp distemper," following the frequent wars of the second part of the eighteenth century, added to the religious demoralization. Gratitude for French help in the War for Independence and sympathy with certain phases of the French Revolution increased "the corruptions of Deism" which, Ezra Stiles said as early as 1759, "are spreading apace in this Country." Yale College, which had been a school for the training of orthodox ministers, was described, in 1787, as "ardent, intensely studious, factious, infidel, opinionated." When Shubael

Bartlett entered Yale in 1796 he was the only member of the freshman class who was pious, while there was no sophomore and only one junior, though there were eight or ten seniors. At this time practically no young people in New Haven were religious, and this condition was not merely local. A minister in Windham, in 1790, made this sweeping denunciation: "The present day is peculiar for men's throwing off the fear of the Lord. Declensions in religion have been increasing for about thirty years past, such as profaneness, disregard of the Sabbath, neglect of family religion, unrighteousness, intemperance, imbibing of modern errors and heresies and the crying prevalence of infidelity against the clearest of light." Others gave the same testimony, and conditions were summed up in the phrase that it was an age of free drinking and free thinking.

To meet the decline of church life and morality and the general indifference of people to religion, all sects and denominations, except the Episcopalian, returned to revivals as the means by which reform might be brought about. Dependence on revivals was inevitable, for theology had not changed, and men were still held to be totally depraved by nature and in need of radical conversion. Leaders and revival preachers appeared, such as Timothy Dwight, who became president of Yale in 1795. The connection with Jonathan Edwards and the earlier revival period is interesting, for not only was President Dwight his grandson, but his own theological training had been received from his uncle, Jonathan Edwards the younger. The latter, one of Connecticut's great teachers of young ministers during the closing years of the eighteenth century, was the pupil and successor of Joseph Bellamy on whom the mantle of the first Edwards had fallen.

A new era of revivals began in the last decade of the

century, after many years during which they had been shunned and feared in Connecticut. "About the year 1798," wrote a New Haven minister, Samuel W. S. Dutton, in 1842, "they commenced again in Litchfield and Hartford counties; were frequent and powerful, and have been growing more frequent and powerful ever since . . . Within the last thirty-seven years, there have been more revivals of religion, and more hopeful conversions in New Haven, than between that time and the first settlement of the place, during a space of one hundred and sixty-six years. The same remark, I presume, is substantially true of the rest of the state and New England."

III

THE second era of revivals, like the first, was preceded by awakenings in individual churches—in Coventry, Norfolk, Preston, and Woodbury—as early as the decade of 1760–1770. "But alas!" as it was said of one of these towns, "It was like a vernal shower—pleasant, but of short continuance." By 1790, however, about twenty churches in Connecticut had experienced revivals,⁵ resulting in additions to membership ranging from twenty in Franklin to ninety-six in Saybrook. In the succeeding years the movement steadily gained in force. "In 1799," said Edward Dorr Griffin, later a famous revival preacher, "I could stand at my door in New Hartford, Litchfield County, and number fifty or sixty congregations laid

⁵ West Hartford, 1772; Wolcott, 1773; Wethersfield, 1774; Killingly, 1776; Goshen and Franklin, 1779; Lyme and Woodbury, 1780; Lebanon, 1781; Yale College and several towns in Litchfield county, 1783; Berlin, Franklin, Harwinton, New Britain, and Farmington, 1784; Saybrook, 1787; Killingly, 1788; Wolcott, 1791. Throughout this Pamphlet, unless otherwise stated, facts and figures refer to Congregational churches, to which, in general, this account has been confined.

down in one field of divine wonders, and as many more in different parts of New England." Within four or five years not less than one hundred and fifty churches in New England experienced revivals. From that time practically each year witnessed a "celestial visitation" in at least one church in Connecticut. The series of revivals thus started extended over more than a half century, and soon spread over a large part of the state.

The general attitude to revivals underwent a change. Instead of feeling dread and avoidance, ministers and leaders longed for them. Little groups of pious persons held special meetings of prayer to petition for an outpouring of the Spirit, and rejoiced at the least sign of an awakening. It might take a year or two of such effort to get a revival started, but once begun it might extend over a considerable period of time. If no general revival was felt for several years, there might be instead a succession of "gentle refreshings from the presence of the Lord." Consequently it was often difficult to draw the line between such a time and one of ordinary growth, or between one revival and the next.

Each church regarded some awakening as its own particular happy time. There was, for instance, the "memorable revival" of 1798-1799 in Canton when, in two groups, about one hundred and seventy new members were added to the church; and that of 1816 which equalled the "glorious day" of 1799. For the state as a whole, there were certain years of special grace: 1800, 1815, 1821 (when between eighty and one hundred congregations were awakened), 1831, 1837-1838, 1842, 1857-1858. Those awakenings known as the Great Revivals of 1800, 1831, and 1858 were parts of movements that were continental in extent. The almost periodic character and succession of these awakenings, often compared to tidal

waves,⁶ were said by an English observer to differentiate them from all other religious excitements. The revival of this kind, in fact, was considered a peculiarly American phenomenon.

In this second period no individuals stood out as prominently as did Edwards, Tennent, and Whitefield, yet there were able leaders and workers. Indeed, at this time as in the preceding century, Connecticut produced a surprising number of effective revival preachers: Samuel John Mills, known as Father Mills, President Dwight, Edward Dorr Griffin, later president of Williams College, Nathan Strong, Joel Hawes, Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel W. Taylor, and Asahel Nettleton. Among Connecticut revivalists of the early nineteenth century was a personage far stranger than any produced by the Great Awakening. This was a native of Coventry, the famous Lorenzo Dow (1777-1834) who was known, with his own approval, as the Crazy or Eccentric Cosmopolite.

Other denominations too—Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists—were affected by these revival movements. Though most of the churches in Connecticut throughout the colonial period belonged to the Congregational order, these three denominations also came to be represented during the eighteenth century. This is not the place to trace their history, but to indicate their attitude to revivals.

Soon after 1700, Anglicans and Baptists began to appear in the colony. The former placed no dependence

⁶Illustrations of the periodic succession of revivals are afforded by statistics from a few churches (some evidently calling gentle refreshings revivals). Revivals in Woodbridge church in 1800, 1821, 1828, 1832, 1837, 1841, 1843, 1858; in Southington church in 1802, 1831, 1838, 1843, 1846, 1849, 1850, 1854, 1858; in Branford church in 1814, 1821-1822, 1831, 1840, 1842, 1851, 1858; in Cornwall Second church in 1800, 1806-1807, 1813, 1817-1818, 1824, 1826-1827, 1831, 1838-1839, 1846, 1851, 1856, 1859-1860.

on revivals as a means of growth. Indeed, as has been seen, their feeling was one of disapproval, and they relied for increase on the labors of missionaries sent over from England to minister to the few churchmen already here. These workers came into Connecticut to baptize the children, to celebrate communion, to organize churches where there were sufficient numbers, and through regular services, to attract others and to gain new members. In 1722, Timothy Cutler, rector of Yale College, and four associates announced their conversion to Anglicanism, but this was brought about by reading and study of books in the college library, not through the work of missionaries. The labors and influence of these men were added to those of the missionaries, but none of them could be classed as a revivalist. They corresponded more nearly to the regular ministers of the Congregational Church. They were regarded by the authorities, however, as intruders and met with the same hostility as the New Light exhorters. Since the missionaries came into Connecticut from New York, and since the first church was formed in Stratford in 1707, it followed that churchmen were most numerous in the southwestern part of the colony, especially in Fairfield county and, in considerable numbers, in New Haven and the surrounding towns.

The way in which the Church of England profited by reactions against the excesses of the Great Awakening has already been indicated. The attitude of its clergy in 1740 was typical of that taken during later revivals. Little direct notice was given to these movements, but there was eagerness to benefit by the increased interest in religion aroused in every one by a local revival. It might be called an attitude of watchful waiting on the activity of others, combined with special attention to the spiritual welfare of their own people. Thus, in 1832,

Bishop Brownell said: "The times in which we live, require that we should take especial heed to ourselves and to our doctrine; that we should be abundant in our labors, vigilant in our care of the Church of God committed unto us, and faithful and zealous in the performance of all our duties. . . . The subject of religion occupies an unusual share of public attention . . . the present has, not inaptly, been called a season of revival. It is highly important, brethren, that we participate in this characteristic of the age." His meaning was not that they should share in promoting the revival, but in the activities stimulated by it, such as missionary work. An even more cordial attitude was manifested in 1858, perhaps partly because the revivals of that period were not attended with undue excitement. Greater efforts were put forth by the clergy, and unusually large numbers were confirmed, especially in New Haven.

While Anglicans were increasing in the western part of Connecticut, Baptists were coming into the eastern section, owing to the nearness of Rhode Island. Missionaries from this neighboring colony labored here, and through the efforts of one of them, Valentine Wightman, the first Baptist church in Connecticut was formed in Groton in 1705.

Baptists placed more dependence on revivals than did Anglicans. They too profited by the Great Awakening and from the troubles following that movement. Mrs. Elizabeth Backus of Norwich was imprisoned for thirteen days for refusing to pay taxes to the established church. Her son, Isaac, became a Baptist minister of such great influence that he is often called the "father of American Baptists." Not only individuals but groups increased the numbers of this denomination. Some Separatist churches became Baptist, and many individuals who objected to

the repressive acts of the authorities joined churches of that order.

In Groton, Valentine Wightman was followed by his son, Timothy, in whose ministry four awakenings occurred between 1764 and 1787. Under the ministry of John Gano Wightman, of the third generation, ten revivals occurred between 1800 and his death in 1841. The Burrows family, of the Second Baptist Church of Groton, was equally favorable to that form of growth. Silas Burrows, of the second generation, minister from 1765 for fifty-three years, himself converted in a revival, added many to his church by that means—one hundred and thirty, for instance, in 1809. In 1840 Jacob Knapp, a pioneer Baptist evangelist from New York state, was in Connecticut for a time, working in Hartford and New Haven. In the latter place several hundreds were converted, including seventy Yale students. About the same time, Jabez S. Swan, born in Stonington in 1800, and settled as minister in that town and in Norwich, conducted revivals in his own church and in other places in the state.

Methodists appeared later in Connecticut, and were definitely and strikingly revivalistic in methods and aims. Jesse Lee came into Stratford in 1789, followed soon by Bishop Francis Asbury and others famous in Methodist annals—men somewhat like the exhorters and itinerant preachers of the Great Awakening. Their piety, zeal, and fervor caused rapid growth in numbers, and the Great Revival of 1800 in particular, added many to this recently organized church. Almost continuous lists of revivals might be given, many occurring simultaneously with those in the Congregational churches. In fact, in some cases it is hard to separate them. Thus, in 1790, Freeborn Garretson visited Cornwall, and reported, "I found that

the Lord had begun a blessed work in this town." Moses Osborn, a local preacher in Southbury, prepared the way for a great revival in the surrounding region, in which many were converted. Some of them joined the Congregational Church, others the Methodist. In Farmington, in 1838, the revival started among the Methodists and spread to the rest of the town. These examples illustrate the remark of Beardsley in his *History of American revivals* that, "if the Methodists shared in the great revival movements of the period, it must be said that other denominations shared in the revivals of the Methodists." A new feature of religious life, the camp meeting, was introduced by the Methodists. Their growth was emphasized by the establishment of Wesleyan University at Middletown in 1831. It should be mentioned also that Episcopalians had established Cheshire Academy in 1801; Washington College at Hartford, now Trinity College, in 1823; and Berkeley Divinity School in 1854 at Middletown.

The progress of the revival of 1800, the general name under which the awakenings of the first years are usually grouped, may be followed in the diary⁷ of Thomas Robbins, who was minister in East Windsor from 1809 to 1827 and a typical member of the Standing Order. Though he was a grandson of Philemon Robbins, who had suffered from the reactionary measures of the preceding century, and though memories of that time were still vivid, his diary reveals none of the apprehension that Daniel Wadsworth had felt in 1740. References begin in December, 1797—"We hear now and then of a little attention to religion"—and continue from time to time

⁷*Diary of Thomas Robbins, D.D., 1796-1854, printed for his nephew, owned by the Connecticut Historical Society, edited and annotated by Increase N. Tarbox (2 vols., Boston, T. Todd, 1886-1887).*

with mention of revivals in various churches. In the spring of 1799 he recorded, "The awakening at Hartford still continues. There is reason to hope for one hundred and fifty. It also spreads in Wethersfield, Farmington, Simsbury, etc. . . . It is beginning in Norfolk with power. I believe there never was a greater work of God in this land; perhaps not so universal as in 1741 and '42, but where it is, more powerful and more evidently the work of God only. It is evidently 'the still, small voice.' It is in about half the towns of this [Litchfield] county, and perhaps nearly as great a part of the county of Hartford." Robbins gave figures showing large numbers added to churches in several towns, and noted the further spread of the revival over most of Litchfield and Hartford counties. The former, which had not been touched to any great extent in 1740, became so distinguished for this sort of religious activity that people talked of Litchfield county divinity. In other parts of the state, churches were awakened that had not been moved since 1740, notably the one in New Haven which owed its existence to circumstances arising out of that revival.

Special mention should be made of the effects at Yale College of the preaching of President Dwight during these years. Just before he entered upon the presidency in 1795, the college church had almost ceased to exist. His efforts here, as elsewhere, were particularly directed toward reviving an interest in religion among educated people, and toward improving the quality of preaching. In general, sermons had become either systems of metaphysical tactics, preached by ministers of the established Congregational Church, or the unpremeditated inspirations of the Separatists. Many of the latter were untrained and justified their undertaking to preach by saying, "St. Peter was a fisherman, do you think he ever

went to Yale College?" Following the awakenings of 1740 and 1757, Yale experienced eighteen revivals between 1783 and 1838. Four of these during Dwight's presidency resulted in the conversion of over two hundred young men. In the first, the "glorious revival" of 1802, at least one third of the students was converted. Besides those who joined their home churches, sixty-three joined the college church, and Yale College became "a little temple." In the one of 1815 seventy or eighty were converted; and in that of 1831, for which long preparation had been made, seventy-four joined the college church and about thirty united with other churches. Another preacher of this period who had great influence in bringing about revivals and in securing their results was Nathan Strong, pastor of the First Church in Hartford from 1774 to 1816. His own church experienced revivals in 1794, 1798-1799, 1808, 1815, and the work was continued by his successor, Joel Hawes, who was minister until 1864.

In many respects the revival of 1800 was a purified and sobered Great Awakening. It rested on the same theological basis—the hard sayings, as they were now called—of man's total depravity and of God's absolute sovereignty in saving whom he pleased, the elect. Converts in 1800 had the same painful experiences as in 1740, starting with conviction of sin and wrestling for salvation. An observer⁸ said, "I have never seen men in such agony, as might easily be mistaken, in its apparent signs, for the remorse of a murderer or the anguish of a convict." This stage often lasted a long time. Samuel John Mills, Jr., son of Father Mills of Torrington, was under conviction

⁸ Supposed to have been the Reverend Orville Dewey to whom is generally ascribed the authorship of the quoted work, *Letters of an English traveller to his friend in England on the 'revivals of religion' in America* (Boston, 1828).

for two years, and Asahel Nettleton for more than ten months.

Simple means were uniformly used in conducting a revival. Dependence was placed mainly on preaching by the minister of the parish, supplemented by such help as he might request from neighboring ministers or from those who were especially successful in revival work and went on tours among the churches of their vicinity. Among such were Alexander Gillett of Torrington, the "good Mr. [Jeremiah] Hallock" of West Simsbury, later Canton, and Father Mills of Torrington. These means were adequate. In 1804 Hallock wrote: "Went with Rev. Mr. Porter to Roxbury. I preached on the depravity of Man, Mr. Mills exhorted; there were evident signs of unusual attention." It was said of a certain sermon by President Dwight that in two instances it obviously brought about a great revival among students at Yale, while similar results followed its delivery in two other places. Besides meetings with preaching (people sometimes attending six or seven sermons a week), conferences were held with those who were aroused. There was, however, little method or plan of procedure, nothing like a religious campaign. On the other hand, there was none of the extravagant behavior which had marred the Great Awakening, and there were no resultant quarrels or divisions of churches. So strong was the dread of repeating the disorders of the earlier period that care was taken against extravagance, undue enthusiasm, and singular actions. Distress over sin was shown, not by hysterical manifestations, but by sadness, tears, and a "solemn, awful stillness, which indicated the special presence of the Lord."

Revivals started in different ways. Sometimes, as has been said, church members, individually or in groups,

were moved voluntarily to pray to bring about such an event, and to prepare themselves for it. Sometimes ministers appointed such meetings of prayer. People were accustomed to pray for definite objects, and believed in special answers to petitions. The actual beginning of a revival might come from the report of such a movement in a neighboring church, or from the conversion of an individual. Often there was no apparent cause, and the revival was described as coming straight from God like manna; or, to borrow another phrase, because the dry bones were animated by the breath of the Almighty. The moving Spirit might manifest itself either as the still, small voice or as a mighty rushing wind. Accounts, prepared by their ministers, of revivals in several churches at this time reveal the remarkable coincidence that the same month, February 1799, witnessed the beginning of special attention in their parishes, and that in many cases the Spirit began almost unexpected and unperceived to move the hearts of individuals. There seemed to be no reason for these visitations except that, "As the wind bloweth as it listeth, so in a free and sovereign might, God's Spirit breathes upon His church."

At such times other occupations were largely set aside. Persons of all ages were affected, but many accounts make particular mention of young people, to emphasize the importance (even under the theology which demanded a definite, individual experience) of the Christian nurture of children in preparing the way for conversion. Though such a result was not inevitable and though Christian training was not an essential preliminary, yet, to use the words of President Dwight, it was felt that, "It is the soul which is taught, alarmed and allured, upon which descends the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit."

Perhaps the most important immediate accomplish-

ment of these first years of revival was the overthrow of the prevailing infidelity. This was notably illustrated at Yale College under the influence of President Dwight. Lyman Beecher, an undergraduate at the time, describing the low moral condition of the college, observed: "Most of the students were skeptical and rowdies were plenty. Wine and liquors were kept in many rooms; intemperance, profanity, gambling and licentiousness were common . . . Most of the class before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, etc., etc. They thought the Faculty were afraid of free discussion. But when they handed Dr. Dwight a list of subjects for class disputation, to their surprise he selected this: 'Is the Bible the word of God,' and told them to do their best. He heard all they had to say, answered them, and there was an end. He preached incessantly for six months on the subject, and all infidelity skulked and hid its head." The extent of the influence of President Dwight throughout Connecticut is indicated by the statement of Samuel Griswold Goodrich (Peter Parley), who was neither a student at Yale nor a resident of New Haven, that he had been trained from childhood to regard him as second only to St. Paul.

An effect of this revival that touched everyone was the enforcement of greater strictness of life, both by public disapproval of dancing and similar amusements, and by the revival of obsolete laws, such as those for the observance of Sunday. Belief in "The Practicability of suppressing vice by means of societies instituted for that purpose"—the title of a sermon by Lyman Beecher, first preached in 1803 and again in slightly different form in 1812—resulted in the formation, in 1813, of the Connecticut Society for Promoting Good Morals, which had branches in various towns. These societies flourished for

a few years, until attention was turned more specifically to the long-standing evils of intemperance. In fact, as early as 1710 Cotton Mather had suggested action against this vice by the principal ministers of Connecticut, for he declared, "The Consequences of the affected Bottel, in that Colony, as well as in ours, are beyond all imagination." Ministers themselves needed reform for they often drank freely and sometimes disastrously. The amount of liquor consumed at meetings of ministers, such as ordinations, became a scandal. Nathan Strong, in his earlier ministry, had even been partner in a distilling business, and when the firm failed, was obliged for a time to stay at home to avoid the sheriff's efforts to serve a writ. Fortunately, the writ could not be served on Sundays, and so he could go out to preach. One clergyman's son said that while ministers, who had come to his father's house, examined his brother in Greek and Latin, he went out behind the barn to gather tansy for their morning bitters. In 1806, Ebenezer Porter of Washington, who had found a man dead in the snow with a bottle of spirits by his side, preached a sermon on intemperance. From this time forth special efforts against this evil steadily became more prevalent.

The pamphlet and sermon war that followed the Great Awakening had a happier counterpart in some literary results of the revival of 1800. Nathan Strong of Hartford published *Sermons on various subjects, doctrinal, experimental and practical* (2 vols., Hartford, 1798-1800), of which the first volume was designed to awaken sinners and the second to develop and confirm the feeling of piety in recent converts. Doctor Strong, with the help of Abel Flint of the Hartford Second Church, compiled *The Hartford selection of hymns* (Hartford, 1799; several later editions), "adapted to the happy revival of religion,"

which is said to have been the first American publication of the sort. The revival movement also led to the publication of a number of religious magazines.⁹ There is good reason to believe that the periodicals and organizations thus begun as the result of the revival of 1800 enabled it to continue longer than any earlier revival, and "more than did all previous movements to fix permanently the evangelistic type of American Christianity."

Sunday schools began to be somewhat generally established, often due to the zeal of some one recently converted in a revival. Joseph Bellamy had had something of the sort among children of his parish in Bethlehem from 1740 until his death, and many ministers had been accustomed to meet young people on Saturday afternoons to hear them recite the Catechism. In Washington, about 1781, children had been instructed during the intermission between services on Sunday. The same thing was done in other places. The first regular Sunday school in Connecticut was started at Norwich in 1816. In the same year the first one in Hartford county was opened at New Britain, and another was started at Derby. In 1818 Sunday schools were begun at Wallingford and in four churches at Hartford, and thereafter the movement spread rapidly.

Not only was religious life re-awakened, but in Connecticut as elsewhere, broader ideas of man's duty as a

⁹The first of these, *The Connecticut evangelical magazine* (15 vols., Hartford, 1800-1815), was also originated and mainly sustained by Strong and Flint, assisted by Jeremiah Day and other ministers. This magazine, which is valuable for its records of revivals, was continued as *The religious intelligencer* (22 vols., New Haven, 1816-1837). Another periodical containing useful material on revivals was *The Christian spectator* (10 vols., New Haven, 1819-1828), changed to *The quarterly Christian spectator* (10 vols., New Haven, 1829-1838), then merged into *The American biblical repository*, which was later continued as *Bibliotheca sacra*. Later there was issued, as a weekly journal, *The Congregational observer* (2 vols., Hartford and New Haven, 1840-1842).

Christian were developed. Instead of being concerned almost exclusively with his own personal salvation, he began to be socially minded, to use a modern term, and he came to feel responsibility for his fellow-beings in less favorable circumstances or outside his immediate vicinity. In 1798 was formed the Missionary Society of Connecticut (incorporated 1802), again largely under the influence of Dr. Strong. This, the second missionary society formed in the country, had been preceded since 1792, and even earlier, by the custom of General or County Associations of Connecticut sending ministers on missionary tours, as they were called, to the new settlements in Vermont, New York, and Ohio. Thus Jeremiah Hallock, who wished to devote himself to itineracy but became the settled minister in West Simsbury, made several such tours under the Missionary Society.¹⁰ These activities recall in some measure the itinerant preachers of the Great Awakening. A Domestic Missionary Society, organized in 1815, paid particular attention to the "waste places"¹¹ in Connecticut. The need for such work was illustrated by the experience of Abel McEwen. When he became minister in New London in 1806, he was for some time the only settled Congregational minister in a territory in Connecticut twelve miles by fifty in extent.

The same spirit turned men's attention to foreign missions. The Foreign Missionary Society of Litchfield County, formed in 1812, was the first auxiliary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which had been organized in 1810 in Farmington and which is the oldest foreign missionary society in the

¹⁰ By 1859, the Missionary Society reckoned that its activities had resulted in the organization of "not far from 500 churches" in the newly settled sections of the United States.

¹¹ See above p. 21.

country. The inspiration for the organization of the American Board came from Samuel John Mills, Jr., and a group of his friends. A few years earlier, while a student at Williams College, Mills and some of his friends had held the famous Haystack Meeting which began the Student Volunteer Movement. Young Mills and all the members of the first group of foreign missionaries from the United States were converts in the revival period of 1800. Mills is also credited with suggesting the organization of the American Bible Society which was effected in New York in 1816 through the coöperation of several local societies. The first Bible Society in the United States had been formed in Philadelphia in 1808 and had been followed in order in the next year by others in Hartford, Boston, New York, and Princeton, and by many other local societies in the immediately ensuing years. The Foreign Mission School in Cornwall was opened in May, 1817, as a result of the plan of Samuel J. Mills, Jr., to educate Obookiah, a native of the Sandwich Islands, to become a missionary to his countrymen. From the New York Tract Society, formed in 1812, and the New England Tract Society, in 1814, came the organization, in 1825, in New York of the American Tract Society. "Wonderful day! Wonderful day! The Bible Society; the Tract Society; the Missionary Society—the waters of the Sanctuary are rising and rising; and by and bye they will overspread the whole earth, and then the latter day of glory will come in!" These words of joyful hope uttered by the old revivalist, Father Mills, touched a chord in the hearts of many converts of this period. In 1815 Joseph Harvey of Goshen, in the course of a sermon preached at the annual meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society of Litchfield County, expressed a confident expectation that the millennium would begin in fifty years. During the

revival of 1831 President Dwight's son, Sereno E. Dwight, proclaimed jubilantly, "I do not see why we may not consider the Millennium as now commencing."

IV

AFTER a short interval of partial suspension and of conditions unfavorable to religion, revival activity started again about 1814. A list of revivals for the succeeding years would practically be a roll-call of the churches of the state. Again certain revivals stand out in the history of individual churches. In 1814, Branford, almost untouched by the Great Awakening, had a partial revival, and the First Church of Hartford gained one hundred and twenty-eight new members, mostly quite young people. In 1816, the church of Shubael Bartlett in East Windsor had the greatest revival occurring during his fifty-year pastorate, 1804-1854. Revivals also took place in Miss Pierce's famous school for girls in Litchfield, in Herrick's School for Young Ladies in New Haven, and in Yale College. Shortly before this a revival in Fairfield, which had begun in the Academy, extended throughout the parish. Thus, even children were regarded as proper subjects for religious attention, and schools, as proper fields for revival activity. A little earlier Edward Dorr Griffin, the minister in New Hartford, had written: "School-masters of serious minds have been employed, who have entered in earnest upon instructing the children in the principles of religion and praying with them. The effect has been, that many schools have been awakened. . . . Three of the schools in this town were last winter under the care of men professedly pious, and very faithful in imparting these instructions. Out of these nearly twenty children, in the course of the winter, it is hoped, were introduced into 'marvellous light.'" Efforts of the

same sort are described in other schools including Cornwall and the academy in Hartford, where Noah Porter said the teachers took a ready part in a revival in the school. In the latter instance, however, the tender age of the twenty-five youthful converts caused their admission to the church to be delayed for a year.

Episcopalians considered this kind of activity unsuited to school life. The author of *The letters of an English traveller* remarked disapprovingly: "I have seen an assembly, and that too collected in a place where the very wisest instruction might have been expected—an assembly of youth—addressed during the whole evening with nothing but the most terrific representations of their state." Nevertheless, this encouragement of revivals in schools is worthy of comment. On the one hand, it was reminiscent of the attitude of early days when the object of education was the training of pious youths, especially to become ministers; and on the other hand, a convert¹² in one of their revivals was soon to rise among the people of Connecticut who was to attack the use of these methods in dealing with children and, indeed, the whole system of revivals.

The year 1815 is usually considered as the climax of this series of revivals, as 1800 was of the preceding one. Referring to 1815, Joshua Bradley said: "In Winchester, Norfolk, New Marlborough, Sandisfield, Goshen, Cornwall, and Salisbury, sinners hastened to Christ as clouds, as doves fly to their windows. From the most correct information received, I conclude that seven hundred were born again in these towns, in the course of the revival." The revival in Salisbury, which came at a time called the darkest in the history of that church, when its male membership was reduced to seventeen or eighteen, re-

¹² Horace Bushnell. See below p. 53.

sulted in the addition of about two hundred new members.

Again, as in the revival of 1800, attempts were often made to assign the beginning of a revival to some definite moment or to some specific individual impulse. This is well illustrated by the following account from Suffield: "The first instance of conversion, was a young woman, who like many others had been very careless and vain. Retiring to rest, one evening, as she blew out her candle, the thought forcibly impressed her mind, that God could as instantly blow away her breath, and what then would become of her immortal soul. Her distress was great, and her convictions increased, until she was enabled to resign her all into the hands of her blessed Saviour." This point of view differed but little from that of the ministers of the early eighteenth century who sought to use earthquakes and epidemics as warnings to awaken their parishioners to seek their souls' salvation.

Figures for later years show that this revival movement had not yet lost its force. In 1816 the church at Torrington gained seventy members; the one in Canton, seventy-one; the one in Woodbury, eighty; and the churches of Waterbury and Harwinton more than one hundred each. In 1817 a church in Seymour was organized because of the "increase of godly people in the present revival of religion," as the organizing council of ministers stated. The church in Haddam had its great revival in 1818 with the addition of one hundred and fifteen members, seventy-four joining in January, 1819. The reception of fifty-nine new members at this time gave a new lease of life to the church in Eastford, which had dwindled to a membership of fourteen women and six men.

One reason for the possibility of these large additions to the churches was, in fact, the small number in full

communion, because of conditions already noted. People generally went to church on Sunday. Attendance had long been compulsory, and fashion and public opinion still favored it. Though congregations were large, membership was small, so that a congregation of five hundred persons might contain not more than fifty who were members. In 1774 the First Church of Hartford had only fifteen male members. It was the number and devotion of those who joined the Congregational churches at this time that enabled them, in 1818, to survive not only disestablishment, with the consequent loss of pecuniary support from taxation, but also rivalry from the growth of other sects.

In 1820 a revival was started in Hartford. Joel Hawes, pastor of the First Church, like his predecessor, Nathan Strong, was a revival minister, of whom it was said that he prayed, preached, visited, talked, and trusted God for a revival. So great was his success, that he was often called upon for service in other cities at times of special religious interest. His own church experienced ten awakenings during his pastorate from 1818 to 1864, with 1681 additions to its membership, of which 1079 were by confession of faith. When the revival began Hawes had but recently come to this, his first charge, and to him, a self-made man, the congregation of "fine folk and fastidious lawyers" looked like an assembly of Roman senators. Feeling the need of help from an older, more experienced man, he sent for Lyman Beecher, a man also moved by one great idea, the promotion of revivals, who said of himself that he was baptized into the revival spirit.

A lively letter tells how a messenger roused Beecher in the night, and how he, "partly dressed, walked the room, with one boot on, saying, 'Wife! Wife! revival in Hartford and I am sent for!' And the Doctor came to us like

a lighted torch in full blaze." Over two hundred were added to the First and Second Congregational churches. The revival extended to all the churches in the Hartford County North Association and resulted in more than a thousand conversions. At the same time awakenings were experienced in other parts of the state—in New Haven about three hundred were added to the churches, one hundred of whom joined the North Church on a single Sunday; in Farmington, out of two hundred and thirty-four additions, one hundred and fourteen were received at one time—to give only two examples. Indeed, revivals occurred in several churches that had not been moved since the Great Awakening. The movement was described as coming on like a flood. Eighty towns in Connecticut experienced revivals in the years 1820, 1821, 1822. Of the thirty-one congregations in New Haven county at least twenty-five were awakened, with from fifteen hundred to two thousand members added to the churches. This was in striking contrast to the generally hostile attitude of people of that county to the Great Awakening. In fact, the revival of 1821, as it came to be known, is said to have started in that county, as the revival of 1800 had started in Litchfield county, and men from New Haven county were invited to visit other parishes to relate its origin and progress.

This revival too had its literary side. The evangelist, Asahel Nettleton, felt that a new selection of hymns was needed, because of the "various benevolent operations, and especially the presence of revivals, which are so characteristic of the present day." Accordingly, he published *Village hymns for social worship* (New York, 1824), designed especially for use in prayer, conference, and neighborhood meetings. Some of the hymns were intended to express the feelings of young converts. The list

of topics under which the hymns were arranged showed both the stages of a revival (alarming, inviting, penitential, conviction and conversion, rejoicing in a revival) and the theology on which it depended (the doctrines of depravity, election, regeneration, efficacious grace). This selection of hymns passed through several editions and had a large circulation.¹³ Nor was Nettleton the only one to feel the need for such a collection of hymns. In the same year, Chauncey Lee, then minister in Colebrook, published *Sermons on the distinguishing doctrines and duties of experimental religion, and especially designed for revivals* (Middletown, 1824) and an accompanying volume of *Scriptural hymns, adapted to Sermons designed for revivals* (Middletown, 1824).

The small meetings, for the use of which *Village hymns* was especially prepared, were a comparatively new institution, and had formerly been regarded with suspicion by many Congregationalists. In Norfolk, the minister started such a meeting on Sunday evenings during the revival of 1799, and was able to continue it. Charles Backus, in conducting a revival in his church in Somers in 1797, besides preaching on Sundays, conducted an extra meeting for the young on Wednesday afternoons and another on Sunday evenings, both held at his house. Nevertheless, he said that people generally needed to use the time during the week for retirement, meditation, and private prayer, rather than for attendance at meetings, and that no rival to the Sunday service should be permitted. When Edward Dorr Griffin, the revivalist, was preaching in different churches as a young candidate, he expressed another point of view: "I felt it to be a princi-

¹³ There was also published *Zion's harp, or a new collection of music, intended as a companion to 'Village hymns' . . . to be used in conference meetings and revivals of religion* (New Haven, 1824).

pal recommendation of a place as my residence, that the people would all allow me to hold as many meetings as I pleased. I held extra meetings in every place where I preached, which was a new thing at that day. What then appeared strange, bating some youthful indiscretions, has long since become the general usage.”

Joel Hawes entered a practically new field when he delivered before young men in Hartford a series of lectures dealing with problems of every day life which he later repeated to students at Yale. These were published and the book¹⁴ had an extensive circulation abroad, besides many editions in the United States. Because of his interest in young people Dr. Hawes, a member of the Yale Corporation, was usually invited to preach at the college at times of special religious interest.

Approval of the system of revivals was not universal. Criticism from Episcopalians has been mentioned. Abigail May, sister of Samuel Joseph May, then the Unitarian minister of Brooklyn, Connecticut, wrote, in 1828, to Bronson Alcott whom she later married: “Our Lyceum is dissolved for want of life; and everybody is praying and weeping for his fellow-sinners. Even the children at school point at those they have been taught to consider sinners, wagging their heads, ‘I am holier than thou.’” English observers were adverse critics, as has been seen in the case of schools.¹⁵ Though the author of *The letters of an English traveller* saw much in revivals that was objectionable, he discussed their various aspects in a fair-minded way. Unfavorable reports of this “transatlantic madness” were generally carried back by travel-

¹⁴ *Lectures addressed to the young men of Hartford and New Haven and published at their united request* (Hartford, 1828). In later editions the beginning of the title was changed to *Lectures on the formation of character*.

¹⁵ See above p. 40.

ling English clergymen, and when Asahel Nettleton went abroad for his health, he hoped incidentally to correct some of these impressions.

The career of this prominent pioneer evangelist belongs peculiarly to this period, and offers an interesting study in comparison with the careers of Whitefield and Davenport. Asahel Nettleton (1783-1844) was born in North Killingworth, Connecticut, of parents who belonged to the church only on the Half Way Covenant plan. He was converted in 1800. Because of poverty he was late in going to college, but was graduated from Yale in 1809. Inspired by accounts in the *Connecticut evangelical magazine* of missionary work, he wished to spend his life in labor among the heathen. But like Samuel J. Mills, Jr.,¹⁶ one of the first group in this country to plan to devote themselves to missionary work, he was not able to go to the foreign field. Because of this desire, Nettleton declined invitations to settle as pastor of a church after he was licensed to preach in 1811. Until he should be able to go as a missionary, he interested himself in similar work at home, notably in building up the "waste places" in Connecticut, which had never recovered from the effects of the itineracy of Davenport and his followers. He was very successful in this work, and having received ordination as an evangelist in 1817, he was called to assist many churches. He visited thirty-two Connecticut towns and held revivals during the years from 1812 to 1822. Besides extensive work in New England and New York, he labored two years in Virginia, whither he went on account of his health. Physical disability finally compelled him to give up the idea of becoming a missionary in the foreign

¹⁶ Mills was in Africa for two months in 1818 as agent for the American Colonization Society. He was commissioned to select a suitable place for the establishment of a colony, and chose what is now Liberia. He died on the return voyage.

field. In 1833 he was asked to become professor of pastoral duty in the new Theological Institute at East Windsor, which later developed into Hartford Seminary Foundation. He did not accept the appointment, but henceforth made the town his home and lectured occasionally to the students.

For zeal and devotion to his work, Nettleton is compared to Edwards and Whitefield, but his experiences and observations in the "waste places" developed views which set him off sharply from those men. Contrary to New Light ideas, he felt that piety was not sufficient equipment for an evangelist; training was equally necessary. Arousing emotions in his hearers, without instruction, was no part of his plan of procedure, and no extravagant enthusiasm was allowed in his meetings. Persons who became unduly affected were removed; in extreme cases, a physician was called or the meeting was dismissed and people were advised to retire in silence to their homes. He never denounced ministers or divided churches, as New Light itinerants had often done. On the contrary, he believed that evangelists had no right to come between pastors and people, and that their usefulness would be short without the confidence of settled ministers. "If they do not invite me into their field," he said, "my business is meekly and silently to retire." If invited, he might stay in a town for a considerable period, working with the minister. Lyman Beecher said of his stay in Litchfield, "Nettleton's preaching and my exhortation seemed to have great effect."

Nettleton's theology was orthodox Calvinism. He held the system of doctrines set forth by Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight, and other New England leaders, believing, for instance, in the depravity of infants. He thought it obviously impossible for those who held wrong doctrinal

views to have a real religious experience, for to deny depravity was to deny the need of redemption and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Nettleton did not consider it possible to "get up" a revival at any time. His only machinery was the inquiry meeting, the use of which he is said to have started before 1820. He made no use of protracted meetings, as they were called, or of "anxious seats." Small prayer meetings, preaching on Sunday, and one or two weekly lectures were the means he employed.

V

BEGINNING in 1830, Connecticut, in common with many places throughout the world, experienced a great revival of religion, which lasted several years before it ceased entirely. Most towns in the state felt this awakening, and many had successive revivals, such as Woodbury with six between 1830 and 1837, which brought one hundred and sixty-two new members into the church. While statistics show much the same results as in preceding revivals, this period saw a development in methods. Though the several devices had occasionally been used earlier those now employed regularly included delegate meetings, conferences, evening meetings, inquiry meetings, and visitations of families by deacons or men appointed by the church. These visitations, when not received with coldness and hostility, must have been somewhat terrifying experiences, with questionings, warnings, and prayers.

Even earlier, in 1827, the English Traveller¹⁷ had considered that American revivals had brought into existence a system of operations as completely as American theology had developed into a system of speculations. He thought that the religion of New England was remark-

¹⁷ See above p. 31.

able, and that its most extraordinary characteristic was this system of revivals. According to his observations, they were not entirely supernatural visitations, but something deliberately worked up by human means, usually beginning with direct and systematic effort by the pastor, whom he spoke of somewhat disrespectfully as the Master of the Revival. At the outset (as already noticed in earlier movements), there was work by the minister to rouse the members of the church; then special meetings of fasting and prayer to ask God for a season of refreshing; and when the revival was actually under way, there were three kinds of meetings, corresponding to the three classes of attendants—converts, anxious, and unconcerned.

In 1831 a new kind of meeting was tried in the churches in Hartford. It was the first of its sort in Connecticut and was called a protracted or four-day meeting. An account is given by a participant in such a meeting held in Norfolk in 1831, at which ministers from neighboring towns assisted. The church first officially resolved on such an undertaking, and set the day on which it should begin. At sunrise of the appointed day a prayer meeting was held, followed in the forenoon by a public meeting for prayer, and by preaching in both afternoon and evening. The general programme for the four days was made up of preaching, interspersed with prayer meetings whenever there was opportunity. On the third day, after the sermon of the afternoon, members of the church retired for a season of prayer, while the anxious ones took their seats. About two hundred and fifty of these were addressed by the ministers; the number increased to about three hundred on the fourth day. After the separate meetings on this day, all came together again for an address, which "concluded the whole indescribable solemnity." This

course was followed by smaller meetings in different places in the parish, and by visitations on both distressed and rejoicing souls.

In order to spread revivals in neighboring towns delegates from the churches were appointed to go with the ministers to hold meetings, as was done by men from New Haven county in 1820-1821.¹⁸ These were in addition to regular evangelists, such as Asahel Nettleton.

The revival of 1838, the next important period, was said by some to have been a result of the panic of 1837. Lists of churches might be drawn up, with figures showing large additions to membership. Again, in each year, one or more churches, and in some years, several, were experiencing revivals. The extent of the movement as a whole and its continuance over a period of time were indicated in a letter written by Professor Chauncey A. Goodrich in 1841: "Saybrook, Westbrook, Essex, Chester, Deep River, Haddam, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Glastonbury, East Hartford, Windsor, Ellington, and I believe, Suffield together with New Britain, Worthington and part of Woodbridge, are at this moment visited." The church in West Haven, for example, which had experienced great revivals in 1821 and 1831, had a "crowning revival" in 1843, and, it may be added, one in 1858 in which it gained one hundred and fifteen new members. The church in Southington received one hundred and twenty-four members in the revival of 1838, and sixty-four in 1858.

The years from 1843 to 1858 are called a time of general religious decline, though awakenings continued to occur in individual churches as in Orange, which gained eighty members in 1843, and in East Haven which, in 1852, experienced the greatest revival in its history.

¹⁸ See above p. 43.

The awakenings in the final years of this half-century of revivals centered in the year 1858, after which the tidal wave again receded. As in 1838, this period of revival activity came directly after a panic, that of 1857, following a period of great prosperity. The revival of 1858, an extensive movement, began in New York city in a weekly, noon-day prayer meeting of business men of all denominations. A remarkable characteristic in Connecticut was the large number of conversions reported among young people and pupils in Sunday schools. At a meeting of the state convention of Sunday school teachers held in New Haven in 1858, conversions of more than five thousand pupils were reported. Since less than half the schools of the state sent in statistics, it was estimated that as many as eight thousand persons of that age were converts during that year. Similar results from individual Sunday schools had occurred before, while the effects of revival work in secular schools have already been noticed.¹⁹

VI

BEFORE considering the attack on the system of revivals made by a leader in the Congregational Church in Connecticut, it is well to estimate its accomplishments. Even so ardent a believer in revivals as Joel Hawes saw the objection which might be raised, namely that the best type of religion is not one that alternates between enthusiasm and earnestness at one time, and indifference and negligence at another. Nevertheless, he considered revivals essential to the existence of the church and gave figures in support of his belief. Between 1818 and 1832 about five hundred and fifty persons had joined his church, of whom not less than four-fifths had come from revivals, and the same thing he said was true in the state

¹⁹ See above, p. 39.

as a whole. This is borne out by the statements of other ministers. Luther Hart, pastor of the church in Plymouth from 1810 to 1834, had seen four revivals in his parish—1812, 1824, 1827, 1831—and had admitted between four hundred and five hundred to membership. In 1832, Noah Porter, the minister in Farmington, stated that, from revivals extending over a period of thirty-seven years (occurring in 1792, 1799, 1821, 1823, 1826), four hundred and sixty had been added to his church, and over three hundred by other means, including more than one hundred transferred from other churches. "But for revivals," he remarked, "as it seems to us, the church would well nigh have ceased to exist, or have lost her distinctive character, in the spirit of the world." John Marsh, who was minister in Haddam and an active leader in the temperance movement, asserted that "revivals of religion are the foundation of Zion's prosperity." Others gave similar testimony.²⁰

The preachers of the second era of revivals still held the faith delivered to the fathers, the theology which made conversion a hard and painful process. President Dwight said that the preacher must use the fire and hammer to break the rock in pieces; Nathan Strong in-

²⁰ In 1822, Nathan Perkins, minister in West Hartford from 1772 to 1838, in his half-century sermon, said that prior to that time there had been six extensive revivals in his church, and that the whole number added during his ministry had been six hundred. Frederick Marsh, minister in Winchester from 1809 to 1851, affirmed that there had been many revivals in his church and that six sevenths of the membership had come from that source. During the pastorate of William Robinson in Southington from 1780 to 1821, the average yearly additions to the church were eight or ten a year in ordinary times. In the revival of 1781 thirty-eight were added; in 1799, twenty-two; in 1815, twenty-eight. The church in Norfolk gained nearly seven hundred and fifty members from nine revivals: sixty in 1783-1784, one hundred and sixty in 1799, one hundred and twenty-five in 1815, sixty in 1821, one hundred and twenty-one in 1827, eighty-three in 1831, thirty-five in 1838 and 1841, one hundred in 1857-1858. Other examples might be given.

sisted that man must "lie at the foot of sovereignty to receive an undeserved favor"; Asahel Nettleton sometimes began his sermons by repeating the word, "Lost, Lost, Lost." Even children in infant schools were taught to sing, "A fallen creature I was born." The system of theology and the corresponding system of revivals had often been questioned, but now, in Connecticut itself, a man appeared whose criticism was constructive as well as destructive, and far-reaching in its effects, the Reverend Horace Bushnell. He had both a theory and a practice to substitute for conversion and revivals. These were the doctrine of Christian nurture and the method of church growth from within, through training, rather than growth from without through conquest, as he called conversion.

In a sense Bushnell was the product of the system he criticized. He was born in New Preston, in Litchfield county, the first home of the awakenings of this period. He was graduated from Yale in 1827, and while there later as tutor had a religious experience during one of the many revivals occurring at the college. As a result he changed his studies from law to theology, and became pastor of the North Congregational Church in Hartford, serving from 1833 to 1859.

In 1836 Bushnell wrote an article on "Revivals of religion," in which he questioned both revivals and the theology which gave rise to them. By a curious turn of fate, this was published in the *Quarterly Christian spectator*, one of the magazines started after an earlier revival. Ten years later, the article, in expanded form, was published as a book with the title *Christian nurture* (Hartford, 1847). It has been called second only to the work of Edwards in the influence which it exerted. Jonathan Edwards, in the first period of revivals, had begun to

undermine the idea of the union of church and state as the Holy Commonwealth or religious Utopia, by emphasizing man's direct, personal relation to God, and the necessity of his definite individual experience of conversion. Horace Bushnell, at the end of the second period of revivals, made an attack at another vulnerable point, the place of the child in the church, since conversion, as understood by the theology of the time, was properly an experience for an adult. Bushnell's thesis was that the child should grow up a Christian, never knowing himself otherwise; and he emphasized religious culture, furnished by the family and the church, as leading naturally into Christian life. To men holding the doctrines of total depravity and sovereign grace, such ideas were revolutionary, and to them Bushnell was an "able but singular" preacher, or as a freshman at Yale in 1842 said of one of his lectures, "It has set the big-wigs in tremendous excitement."

The difference between the two systems may be brought out sharply by quotations from the letters of one or two ministers to their own children—all well-behaved young people. Lyman Beecher wrote to one son: "I have no child prepared to die; and however cheering their prospects for time may be, how can I but weep in secret places when I realize that their whole eternal existence is every moment liable to become an existence of unchangeable sinfulness and woe." To another son he wrote that his father's prayers could not save him, and he could "rely only on the sovereign mercy of God, and saying to Him that if He passes you by He will do you and me no injustice . . . Oh, my dear son, *agonize* to enter in. You *must* go to heaven; you *must not* go to hell." Joel Hawes, who said that his theology was that held by the church for two hundred and twelve years, wrote to his son, in

1848, that his case was utterly hopeless unless God "may see fit to interpose in your behalf. To him, therefore, you are to go, just as you are—poor, guilty, lost—confess all this before him, owning your utter unworthiness of his favor, and submitting yourself to him forever."

These letters might be supplemented by accounts from young people themselves. Harriet Lathrop of Norwich, who later went as the wife of a foreign missionary, joined the church at the age of thirteen, after conversion. She said she felt herself "a great sinner [who was] wretched and must perish forever . . . I seemed to expect some special revelation from Him of my adoption, and often prayed that some angel might come and give me the so-much-desired assurance." This is the same kind of conversion as that of David Brainerd in the Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards, who knew him, said: "His conversion was no confirming and perfecting of moral principles and habits, by use, and practice, and industrious discipline, together with the concurring suggestions and conspiring aids of God's spirit; but entirely a supernatural work, at once turning him from darkness to marvellous light, and from the power of sin to the dominion of divine and holy principles."

In contrast, Bushnell wrote to his child: "You have been religiously educated, and you are now come to a place where you must begin to be more responsible to yourself. Our prayer for you is, that every day, God would impart his grace to you and draw you on to a full choice of himself, and perform the good work which we trust He has begun in you . . . do not inquire so much what you are, whether truly a Christian in heart or not, as how you may come into the full Christian spirit, to become unselfish, to have a distinct and abiding love for Christ."

Another charge in Bushnell's indictment of revivals was that they were a kind of religious epidemic; that they were considered as something coming from heaven like manna; that they were viewed as the act of a wonder-working Providence, in response to the prayers and fastings of the pious, as well as the work of individuals of a certain temperament such as Whitefield and Nettleton.

Christian nurture was followed by other books from Bushnell's pen, which were regarded as heretical. "He seems to be going into Unitarianism," and "It is anything but Orthodoxy," said one of his clerical neighbors. Attempts were made to bring him to trial before the Consociation, as in the days of Old and New Lights. In 1852 his church, like some churches in the controversies following the Great Awakening, withdrew from the local Consociation, thereby making this action against him impossible, but he was the object of many literary attacks and much bitter feeling. Dr. Hawes, pastor of the First Church, for instance, whose theology was that of the New England fathers, suspended ministerial relationship with him.

It should be said, however, that Bushnell recognized a place for revivals, both as a variety of religious experience, and for what they had actually accomplished in bringing life into dead churches, and rousing the spirit that led to missions and other activities for the improvement of mankind.

Thus in a little over two hundred years the Congregational churches of Connecticut went through a cycle of thought and experience as to the best method of assuring the continued growth of religion. To a certain extent it was always recognized by every one that there is a place for both conversion and irregular increase by revivals, and for Christian nurture and steady growth. Though the

dreams of establishing a religious Utopia in the New World had vanished, though the outward forms of religion had undergone various changes, and though even theological views had become modified, the faith of the fathers was still in essential spirit the faith of their descendants.

Bibliographical Note

BESIDES works listed in the text or the footnotes because of their integral or intimate relation to the narrative, attention may be specially called to the following books devoted primarily to the history of revivals: Joshua Bradley, *Accounts of religious revivals in many parts of the United States from 1815 to 1818* (Albany, 1819); Calvin Colton, *History and character of American revivals of religion* (1832); Joseph Tracy, *The great awakening* (Boston, 1842); Bennet Tyler, *New England revivals* (Boston, 1846); Heman Humphrey, *Revival sketches and manual* (New York, 1859); Charles L. Thompson, *Times of refreshing, a history of American revivals from 1740 to 1877* (Chicago, 1877); Silas Leroy Blake, *The Separates or strict Congregationalists of New England* (Boston, 1902); Frank G. Beardsley, *A history of American revivals* (New York, 1904).

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Bushnell (Boston, 1899) by Theodore T. Munger. A wealth of data will be found in *Contributions to the ecclesiastical history of Connecticut* (New Haven, 1861), edited by Leonard Bacon and others. No attempt has been made to cite more familiar and easily accessible works.

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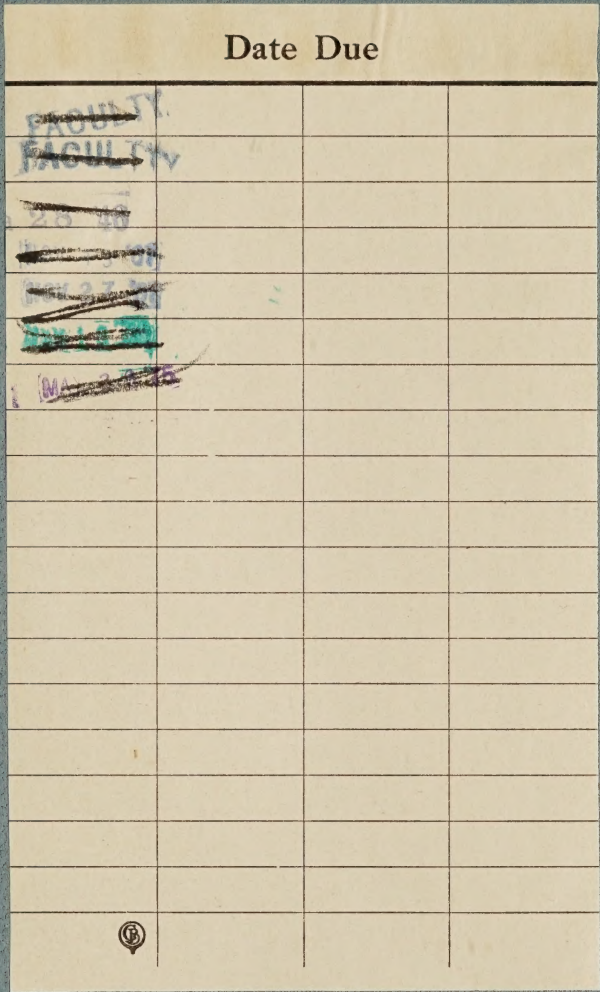
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